



Subject:	Requests for containerised storage at Falls Park and Sally Gardens
Date:	6 th December 2022
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, director Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager, CNS Jacqui Stewart, Assets Co-ordinator, CNS

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To advise and seek member support in dealing with two requests from soccer clubs for installation of containers on council land.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">That members support the application for installation of a storage container by Belfast Celtic at Falls Park for their own use. This recommendation is based on the recent incidents of vandalism resulting in damage to the Club's equipment.That members do not support the request from Celtic Boys for installation of a container for their exclusive use at Sally Gardens on the basis that the requirements for storage at the wider site and the expectations of the broad range of users are not fully understood at this time.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That members make recommendations as appropriate to Strategic Policy and Resources committee regarding the agreements required to govern the installations approved. • That officers will recommence work on development of a policy to govern the use of containerised storage at CNS sites and whilst this is in development no further requests will be considered.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Members may recall that in April of 2017 the committee received and approved a report from the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services establishing a management position in respect of the provision of containers and other storage accommodation on land owned and managed by Belfast City Council. The management position was adopted in the absence of any formal policy.</p>
3.2	<p>The Committee agreed that where it can be established that containers are required by a sports club for storage of essential equipment the Council will consider granting permission. Factors influencing decision making include consideration of proposed use, regularity of the use; appearance, size and access; in addition the sports club would be responsible for maintenance; obtaining appropriate public liability and building/content insurance and for installation and subsequent removal as well as the cost of any reinstatement required at the site.</p>
3.3	<p>A key factor in support of any approval is a pre-existing formal relationship between the club and the council at the site. Where existing relationships, governed by a legal agreement such as an FMA a lease or a partner agreement, are in place they provide a surety and leverage should the Terms and Conditions of use of any containerised facility be broken. It was agreed that where permission is to be granted it would be limited to the period of the existing agreement or would be for a period deemed reasonable by the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood services but not initially to exceed 2 years.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>In the absence of a formal policy, City and Neighbourhood services departmental asset board have been managing containerised storage requests on this basis. Two requests have now come forward simultaneously which warrant consideration by members as they</p>

	<p>sit outside the normal circumstances, ie. there is no existing agreement with the club at the site.</p>
3.5	<p>The first is a request from Belfast Celtic FC who are seeking permission to install at their expense, a storage container near the 3G pitch in Falls Park. The request comes because goalposts owned by the club but stored at the pitch, have been repeatedly broken and vandalised. There have been at least seven recorded incidents of antisocial behaviour leading to damage of the club's property and costing the club several hundreds of pounds in repair and replacement costs. Despite the efforts of council officers to curb the anti-social behaviours at the site the risk to the club's equipment remains. The council is not currently in a position to provide storage for the club's equipment and the club therefore are requesting permission to purchase and to house a storage container on council land to be able to safely store this equipment.</p>
3.6	<p>The club have no formal facility management or partner agreement for use of this site but, in common with other users, book the site through the normal council booking process. Belfast Celtic are the most frequent user of these pitches, their recent bookings amount to 43% of the total with the other 57% split across nine other users.</p>
3.7	<p>The second request has been made by Celtic Boys FC who have asked for permission to install a container at their own expense to house equipment on land in the car park adjacent to the pitch at Sally Gardens Community Centre. This club has no formal agreement with the council for use of the site other than through the standard booking process.</p>
3.8	<p>The pitch at Sally Gardens is subject to an agreement governed by the GAA joint management board. The board submit block booking requirements twice yearly and only once they have been put on the system can other sports including soccer make bookings on the site. Celtic Boys FC are one of 10 regular customers and their bookings represent 28% of the total with Oliver Plunkett FC being the most frequent user with bookings representing 32%.</p>
3.9	<p>In considering both of these requests the requirements and expectations of the broad range of site users need to be given consideration particularly in relation to any perceived opportunity for other users to request additional containers for their exclusive use.</p>

	<p>The CNS assets board is recommending that members support the application for installation of a storage container by Belfast Celtic at Falls Park for their own use. This recommendation is based on the recent incidents of vandalism resulting in damage to the Club's equipment. If supported the agreement would run for a maximum period of 2 years and align to the management position established by the 2017 committee decision as outlined in paragraph 3.2 of this report.</p>
3.10	<p>In considering the request by Celtic Boys FC at Sally Gardens the CNS asset board could find no immediately evident reason to warrant the installation of storage at the site for the exclusive use of this one club. On the basis that supporting the request may not best serve the requirements and expectations of the broad range of site users the board is recommending members do not grant the club's request at this time. However, given the significant physical changes ongoing at Sally Gardens in developing The Colin Healthy Living Centre officers propose a comprehensive review of storage requirements at the site to highlight any gaps in supply and identify solutions to best serve the needs of users across sports and community programming.</p>
3.11	<p>In considering these requests for containers and the nature of the equipment the clubs are seeking to store at council sites, officers have identified what may be a gap in provision. Some further work is required to fully understand the extent to which large non portable equipment, over and above that provided by council as a standard part of the booking, is required to support pitch use. Officers propose to review equipment provision and, if a gap exists, how such equipment might best be supplied and stored.</p>
3.12	<p>The current and other recent requests have also highlighted the weaknesses of operating under a management position and reinforce the need for development of a formal policy on provision of containers at council sites. Work on development of this policy, begun pre pandemic by the CNS policy and business development unit, had identified at least thirty five CNS sites utilising containers for storage, most sites with more than one container and the majority owned by site users rather than by council. Officers propose that this work, having been paused to allow CNS to focus on other priorities, is recommenced. Whilst this work is ongoing no further requests for installation of containerised storage by site users will be considered.</p>

3.13	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>In line with the position agreed in 2017 those clubs being authorised to place containerised storage on council land will be responsible for all costs associated with supply of the container, obtaining any necessary planning permission, obtaining appropriate public liability and contents insurance and for installation, maintenance and subsequent removal as well as the cost of any reinstatement required.</p> <p>Whilst both requests indicate that the clubs would meet all installation and operational costs and would be governed by a suitable agreement drafted with support of officers from the estates and legal team, it should be noted that compliance failures in the past have resulted in council being forced to remove facilities of this nature from sites and as a result council has incurred significant cost.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.14	None
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None